

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A guide for use in medical procedures, comprising:
2
3 a stem portion having a proximal end and a distal end and a cross-sectional
4 shape having a recess therein along its length; and
5
6 first and second extension portions extending outwardly from opposites
7 sides of the distal end of the stem portion, each of said first and second extension
8 portions further comprising a stationary portion that is fixedly coupled to the stem
9 portion and a movable portion that is movably coupled to the stationary portion,
10 the movable portions being movable relative to the respective stationary portions
11 between a first position wherein the stem portions extends beyond the extension
12 portions by a first distance and a second position wherein the stem portion
13 extends beyond the extension portions by a second distance that is greater than
14 the first distance.
- 1 2. The guide according to claim 1, wherein when the extension portions are in
2 the first position the length of the stem portion that extends beyond the extension
3 portions is approximately 55-65 mm, and wherein when the extension portions are in
4 the second position the length of the stem portion that extends beyond the extension
5 portions is approximately 65-75 mm.
- 1 3. The guide according to claim 1, wherein the cross-section of the stem portion
2 is substantially C-shaped.
- 1 4. The guide according to claim 1, wherein the extension portion further
2 comprises a plurality of gripping elements.

1 5. The guide according to claim 1, wherein for each extension portion, the
2 movable portion is bendably coupled to the stationary portion.

1 6. The guide according to claim 1, wherein for each extension portion, the
2 movable portion is pivotably coupled to the stationary portion.

1 7. The guide according to claim 1, wherein the first and second extension
2 portions extend outwardly from opposite sides of the stem portion to form an angle
3 therebetween of approximately 135 to 180 degrees.

1 8. The guide according to claim 1, wherein the first and second extension
2 portions extend outwardly from opposite sides of the stem portion to form an angle
3 therebetween of approximately 45 to 135 degrees.

1 9. A guide for use in a medical procedure to treat female urinary incontinence,
2 said medical procedure involving the use of one or more surgical needles coupled to
3 a tape to be implanted as support for the patient's urethra, the guide comprising:
4

5 a stem portion having a proximal end and a distal end and a cross-section
6 having a recess therein along its length, the recess being shaped to receive therein
7 said one or more surgical needles; and
8

9 first and second extension portions extending outwardly from opposites sides
10 of the distal end of the stem portion.

1 10. The guide according to claim 9, wherein each of said first and second
2 extension portions further comprise a stationary portion that is fixed relative to the
3 stem portion and a movable portion that is movable relative to the stem portion
4 between a first position wherein the stem portion extends beyond the extension
5 portions by a first distance, and a second position wherein the stem portion extends

6 beyond the extension portions by a second distance that is greater than the first
7 distance.

1 11. The guide according to claim 9, wherein the stationary portion is fixedly
2 coupled to the stem portion and the movable portion is movably coupled to the
3 stationary portion.

1 12. The guide according to claim 10, wherein in the first position the movable
2 portion extends from the stationary portion in substantially the same plane.

1 13. The guide according to claim 12, wherein in the second position the movable
2 portion extends from the stationary portion at an angle.

1 14. The guide according to claim 12, wherein in the second position the movable
2 portion is substantially adjacent to the stationary portion.

1 15. The guide according to claim 10, wherein the first distance is approximately
2 55-65 mm and the second distance is approximately 65-75 mm.

1 16. The guide according to claim 9, wherein the first and second extension
2 portions extend outwardly from opposite sides of the stem portion to form an angle
3 therebetween of approximately 135 to 180 degrees.

1 17. The guide according to claim 9, wherein the first and second extension
2 portions extend outwardly from opposite sides of the stem portion to form an angle
3 of approximately 45 to 135 degrees.

1 18. A method for implanting a sub-urethral sling to treat urinary incontinence,
2 comprising:
3

4 dissecting a first tract through the body from a vaginal incision, to one side of
5 the urethra, and through the obturator foramen;

6
7 providing a guide including a substantially straight stem portion having a
8 proximal end and a distal end and a cross-section having a recess therein along its
9 length, the recess having a shape for receiving therein first and second surgical
10 needles, the stem portion having first and second extension portions extending
11 outwardly from opposites sides of the distal end of the stem portion;

12
13 inserting the guide into the dissected tract so that the distal end substantially
14 enters an opening in the obturator membrane and the extension portions remain
15 external of the vaginal incision;

16
17 passing the first surgical needle having a first end of a tape coupled thereto
18 through the dissected tract along the guide recess;

19
20 removing the guide and passing the tape out through the obturator foramen;

21
22 dissecting a second tract through the body from a vaginal incision, to the
23 other side of the urethra, and through the obturator foramen on the opposite side;

24
25 inserting the guide into the second dissected tract so that the distal end
26 substantially enters and opening in the obturator membrane and the extension
27 portions remain external of the vaginal incision;

28
29 passing the second surgical needle having a second end of the tape coupled
30 thereto through the dissected tract along the guide recess;

31
32 removing the guide and passing the tape out through the obturator foramen
33 on said opposite side; and

34

35 adjusting the tape to form a sling beneath the urethra.

1 19. The method according to claim 18, wherein the extension portions of the
2 guide member further comprise a stationary portion that is fixed relative to the stem
3 portion and a movable portion that is movable relative to the stem portion between a
4 first position wherein the stem portion extends beyond the extension portions by a
5 first distance, and a second position wherein the stem portion extends beyond the
6 extension portions by a second distance that is greater than the first distance.

1 20. The method according to claim 19, further comprising the step of, following
2 the guide element inserting steps, moving the movable portion from the first position
3 to the second position.